



September 20, 2012

Gelitin: ‘The Fall Show’

By ROBERTA SMITH

Greene Naftali

508 West 26th Street, Chelsea

Through Oct. 13

The fun-loving Austrian collective Gelitin has never shied from disrupting art world business as usual. The title of the group’s latest offering, “The Fall Show,” suggests a celebration of the new art season, but gravity, not autumn, is the point. So if the general moneyed tone of art or the first round of fall gallery shows has you down, the participatory works here may allow a momentary venting of frustration.

Exemplifying the latest trends in cheerful found-object assemblage, the 17 sculptures in this exhibition sit on rigged pedestals. Push a little lever toward the bottom of a pedestal, and the sculpture is dislodged, falling to the floor. The repercussions vary as the materials do, ranging from soft to rigid and delicate to sturdy. A few works seem to be holding up fairly well, especially one made of stuffed animals; one involving rope; and a third (spoiler alert) featuring a hidden helium balloon that floats up, possibly to your surprised relief.

But most are slowly or not so slowly falling to pieces, acquiring new parts and becoming harder and harder to reassemble, should you choose to do so. What’s left of a once tall vase made of multicolored fiberglass has become (for the time being) the vessel for its own shards. A large ellipse of colored Plasticine that began as a head has lost its features and is becoming increasingly squat. “Let’s Have a Ball,” a big basketlike orb of thin lath containing a few balloons, is slouching toward smithereens.

See “The Fall Show” while it lasts. The question of whether the pieces are being destroyed or completed via viewer participation hangs in the air, not least because all the works — or what is left of them — are for sale. Unscathed versions of some pieces are also available for purchase. These, too, come with the levered pedestals, but ownership may confer kinder treatment.